

Date: November 7, 2002

BQA Memo 02-020

Rescinds and Replaces Memo 02-017

To:	Community Based Residential Facilities	CBRF - 09
	Facilities for the Developmentally Disabled	FDD - 08
	Home Health Agencies	HHA - 10
	Hospices	HSPC - 06
	Hospitals	HOSP - 10
	Licensed Adult Family Homes	AFH - 06
	Nurse Aide Training and Testing Programs	NATP - 06
	Nursing Homes	NH - 09
	Residential Care Apartment Complexes	RCAC - 07
From:	Donna Cochems, Chief Caregiver Regulation and Investigation Section	
cc:	Susan Schroeder, Director Bureau of Quality Assurance	

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry and Competency Testing Services Update Series
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Earlier this year, BQA issued Memos numbered 02-011 and 02-017 regarding updates to the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry and Competency Testing Services. For several reasons, BQA has contracted with Promissor, Inc. to both take over the maintenance of the Nurse Aide Registry and implement a single statewide test for evaluating nurse aide competency. Promissor will provide enhanced services and access to the Registry and will implement the nurse aide testing process by contracting with evaluators to administer the Written or Oral Test and Skills Evaluation at approved in-facility and regional testing sites. The procedure for testing upon completion of the nurse aide training program will change. Upon successful completion of a training course, training programs should assist candidates in sending a Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation Application to Promissor. A test date and location will be provided to the candidate at a regional or in-facility site. All reasonable efforts will be made to best accommodate the needs of the applicant.

Originally, Promissor was to begin the maintenance of the Registry and the testing process on November 13, 2002. All facility-based and private testing programs previously approved under HFS ch. 129 were to cease administering their tests on October 31, 2002. As a result of input gathered at four statewide informational sessions during September 2002, the Bureau has adjusted the original implementation date. Competency testing by Promissor will be rolled out in stages. The adjusted timetable is as follows:

- **Approved facility-based and private testing programs** were scheduled to stop competency testing nurse aide students effective October 31, 2002. Any tests administered by a previously approved facility-based or private testing programs prior to the cut-off date must be submitted to BQA as soon as possible for inclusion on the Registry. Continue to use the current Wisconsin Nurse Aide Directory Competency Evaluation Application forms for this purpose. **Effective November 1, 2002, contact the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Testing Services (WNATS)** to schedule a competency test for the following candidates:
 - newly trained nurse aide candidates
 - nurse aides currently listed on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry, whose eligibility status has expired
 - nurse aides currently listed on another state's nurse aide registry
- **Approved semester-based nurse aide training and testing programs**, e.g., Wisconsin Technical College System, other university and high school programs may **continue to utilize currently approved examinations to competency test students enrolled and attending a first semester 2002-2003 school**

year course. Completed Wisconsin Nurse Aide Directory Competency Evaluation Application forms must be submitted to BQA for these students for inclusion on the Registry.

- **The enhanced Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry** will be available effective December 16, 2002. On that date, the Internet-based Registry will be available on Promissor's website at www.promissor.com. An aide's Registry status will also be available by calling the new Interactive Voice Response at **(877) 224-0235**. There will be no limit to the number of requests during each call and requesters will receive a faxed back response of the aide's current Registry status.
 - Employers must continue to call the current IVR at (877) 573-1081 to verify a nurse aide's employment eligibility **through December 15, 2002**.
 - **Effective December 16, 2002**, the current Nurse Aide Directory IVR at (877) 573-1081 and Bureau of Quality Assurance Nurse Aide Directory services at (608) 267-2374 will no longer be available.

Nurse Aide Competency Test Fee Information

Promissor has established the following fees for administration of the National Nurse Aide Assessment Program™ in Wisconsin. If a nurse aide candidate fails a portion of the examination, the candidate will only be required to retake that portion of the test.

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| • Written or Oral Examination and Skills Evaluation (both) | \$100 |
| • Written or Oral test ONLY | \$41 |
| • Skills Evaluation ONLY | \$59 |

The appropriate fee must be submitted along with the completed Wisconsin Competency Evaluation Application form. The fee may be paid by MasterCard or Visa, money order, company check or certified check, made payable to "WNATS." If the examination is paid by credit card, the application form may be faxed to WNATS.

Nurse aide candidates who pay their own testing fees are eligible for reimbursement of some of the expense if a nursing home has employed or offered employment within 12 months after successfully passing the competency test. Nursing homes that incur nurse aide training and/or testing costs are also eligible for Medicaid reimbursement. If you have further questions regarding nurse aide training and/or testing reimbursement, contact the Bureau of Health Care Financing, Nursing Home Section at (608) 267-0996 or (608) 267-9312.

Handbook and Forms

Draft versions of the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Candidate Handbook and Nurse Aide Registry forms were distributed during the September 2002 informational sessions. The Handbook and forms have been modified as a result of input and suggestions provided to the Bureau. The Handbook has all the necessary information about the testing application process, testing procedures, etc. The Handbook serves as a useful tool and reference guide to nurse aide candidates, training programs and employers.

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Candidate Handbook: This Handbook provides nurse aide candidates with detailed instructions regarding the competency test process (the Written or Oral Examination and Skills Evaluation), scheduling information, and Registry issues. **The approved Wisconsin Nurse Aide Candidate Handbook is now available on Promissor's website (select "Testing Services," select "nurse aides," then scroll to "Wisconsin").** A small supply of Handbooks will be issued to each approved nurse aide training program. Contact Promissor to request larger orders. A complimentary Handbook will be issued to each health care provider required to employ nurse aides. Major policy changes from the previous draft version of the Handbook include the following:

- The nurse aide candidate must complete the initial competency test within 120 business days of enrollment in the training program. If the candidate does not successfully pass both portions (Written or Oral Examination and Skills Evaluation) of the competency test, the candidate has one year to repeat the test. If the test is not successfully completed within one year, a new nurse aide training course must be completed.
- Nurse aide candidates have unlimited opportunities to repeat the competency test.
- Nurse aide candidates will receive an official score report indicating the results of the test on the day of the test. If the candidate successfully passed the competency test, the aide's name will be included on the

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry the following day. A nurse aide wallet card and wall certificate will be issued shortly thereafter.

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation and Registry Forms: The following approved versions of the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Competency Evaluation and Registry forms are now also available on Promissor's website:

- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Program Application for Competency Evaluation
- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Out-of-State Application
- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Program Change or Correction Form
- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Renewal Form
- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Program Medication Aide Registry Application

It is extremely important that nurse aides promptly report address and name changes to Promissor, as Renewal notices will be issued to the aide's address on record 60 days prior to the aide's employment eligibility expiration date. A Nurse Aide Registry and Competency Testing flyer has been prepared for posting at facilities that employ nurse aides, to help communicate the need to maintain current information with the Registry. This flyer is available on the Department's website. **Effective December 16, 2002, all Registry forms must be submitted to Promissor, PO Box 13785, Philadelphia, PA 19101-3785.**

Nurse Aide Evaluator Information

Nurse aide evaluators located throughout Wisconsin have been approved to administer Promissor's standardized National Nurse Aide Assessment Program™ Examination. Approved evaluators have completed orientation for meeting neutral, objective and secure testing standards. This is an excellent casual employment opportunity for qualified nurses who are interested in a part-time employment. WNATS will ensure nurse aide evaluators do not administer the competency test to any candidate trained by the evaluator or by an affiliated program. If you are interested in applying to be a nurse aide evaluator, please contact WNATS. Nurse aide evaluator qualifications include the following:

- Registered nurse with current, active Wisconsin license
- At least one year of long term care or experience caring for the chronically ill of any age
- Must not be a Director of Nursing for a health care provider

Nurse Aide Test Site Information

WNATS has approved in-facility and regional test site applications throughout the state. The test site must meet state and federal nurse aide training and testing program requirements. WNATS processes completed Competency Evaluation Application forms within 48 hours. A competency test is promptly scheduled at either an in-facility or regional test site. WNATS **must** schedule the initial competency test within 120 business days of enrollment in the nurse aide training program.

In-Facility Test Sites: An in-facility test site is generally a facility that sponsors a nurse aide training program and has been approved for competency test administration. WNATS will contact the training program and arrange a mutually acceptable date and time for testing. A nurse aide evaluator will be assigned to administer the competency test at the facility. WNATS has established general guidelines regarding the necessary in-facility test equipment and a minimum number of five candidates for scheduling. However, WNATS will be flexible with these guidelines. Please contact WNATS if you are interested in applying for in-facility test site approval.

Regional Test Sites: Regional test sites and schedules are being established throughout Wisconsin. WNATS schedules a candidate for testing at the closest regional site when in-facility testing is not available. The facility test site must meet state and federal nurse aide training and testing program requirements. WNATS has established general guidelines regarding necessary regional test equipment. However, WNATS will be flexible with these guidelines. Please contact WNATS if you are interested in applying for regional test site approval.

Additional Nurse Aide Competency Testing and Registry Information Sessions

The Department is scheduling two additional Nurse Aide Competency Testing and Registry Update information sessions. These information sessions will be targeted to health care providers that employ nurse aides. The sessions will help answer questions regarding the competency testing process, Nurse Aide Registry access, renewal process, etc. All are welcomed, but facility administrators, directors of nursing and human resource personnel are encouraged to attend. Training announcements will be issued soon.

Contact References

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Testing Service – If you are a nurse aide, training program, or health care provider who employs nurse aide, please call toll-free (877) 290-3499 about:

- Nurse aide testing process
- Scheduling an examination
- Applying to be a nurse aide evaluator
- Applying to be a regional or in-facility test site

Promissor - Effective December 16, 2002, if you are a nurse aide or health care provider who employs nurse aides please call the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry, toll-free (877) 329-8760 or check Promissor's website at **www.promissor.com**, click on **“Other Services,”** click on **“Registry Services,”** click on **“Nurse Aides,”** then scroll to **“Wisconsin”** for information regarding:

- Nurse Aide Registry status
- Reporting a nurse aide's current address
- Nurse Aide Registry renewal process
- Nurse Aide Registry forms

Wisconsin Caregiver Regulation Unit: Please call (608) 261-7650 or e-mail at Caregiver_Intake@dhfs.state.wi.us, if you have questions about:

- Federal or state nurse aide guidelines
- Substantiated findings on the Caregiver Misconduct Registry

DHFS Nurse Aide Training and Registry Website

Please be sure to frequently check the Department's website for the latest news on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Competency Testing and Registry services and quick links to Promissor's website. The Bureau will also post a Frequently Asked Question document to address issues that have been raised. The address is www.dhfs.state.wi.us. Click on **“Licensing,”** click on **“Licensing-Health/Medical Care”** and then on **“Nurse Aide Training and Registry.”**